

Note: The following interview was conducted in late September by a member of Anti-Fascist Info following mobilizations against the presence of members of the Front National Party in Montreal. The Front National is an extreme right party in France (see documentation on September 22/93 demonstration) which had sent three delegates to attend an international conference of mayors entitled Metropolis '93, organized by the World Association of the Major Metropolises. The individual interviewed is an autonomous anti-fascist; that is, he belongs to no organized anti-fascist groups. He did however participate in the Coalition contre la presence du Front National et la Montee de l'extreme droite, which organized protests against the Front National.

(1) Let's start with your feelings about the demonstration against the Front National on September 22/93.

First I should say I'm not sure of everything that happened at the demonstration; we're not going to have a meeting to talk with everyone for a few weeks... I'm glad that the FN meeting was cancelled, though I'm not sure if that was because of our demo. or because of the split between themselves and members of the Klan earlier that day. As for the demo. itself I was glad to see so many people there, especially so many people from out of town, though I was kind of sorry to see some members of the coalition try and put a rapid halt on things later in the night when people started breaking windows and things like that. The reason that this happens is there's a lot of liberals in the coalition and a lot of people who are just inexperienced who might react differently in the future, but they've just never thought of the issues involved in a militant demo. Amongst the people doing security there are a lot of people who even though might agree with the kinds of tactics being used, just panicked because they had never been in a situation like that.

What kinds of groups were involved in the Coalition contre la presence du Front National et la Montee de l'extreme droite?

When you see it on paper it's a very broad range of community groups, mainly with a few left-wing groups, and there are a lot of community groups who've done a lot of very important work with the coalition. But in meetings the speaking and decision making and the people who have an agenda are mainly people from established left groups in Montreal. The coalition itself came together at the request of the Canadian Centre on Racism and Prejudice (CCRP). It involved from the beginning a few Trotskyist groups, several Maoist-oriented groups as well as a few anarchist groups, and those groups have remained with it the whole way and set the tone for many of the discussions. Other groups that are involved, that do a lot of important work but unfortunately haven't taken up space in the meetings, and haven't set the tone for any of the discussions that have gone on.

(2) Maybe you could give some background to the Front National's (FN) visit to Montreal: why were they here?

The members of the FN were in Montreal ostensibly for a world conference of mayors which is being hosted by the City of

Montreal, and they were there with many mayors from around the world. The real reason they were chosen to come, or a probable reason, was because Jean-Yves Le Gallou is high up in the party. He's responsible for the anti-immigrant platform of the FN. One of the other members who came is the head of the Cercle national des Francais al'etrange, which is the National Circle of French Residents Living Abroad. The Cercle is basically the FN's foreign affiliates- in every country you'll have one if there are FN supporters. In any city where there are FN supporters there could be one. It's basically a way for people to keep in touch with the FN in France, and basically feeling that they're doing "their bit" by aiding the struggle in France. The Cercle here in Quebec is headed by a Mr. Roger Alacoque, who was a member of the Federal Liberal Party (note: Alacoque was expelled from the Liberals in September 1993, see documentation). Le Gallou and two other NF deputies were invited by Alacoque to attend a meeting which was supposed to include members of the extreme right from Ontario, such as the Heritage Front, as well as local members of the Klan and specifically, more important than the Klan, members of Jeunes Nations- which is a fascist Quebecois nationalist group- and members of various groups within the Jeunes Nation's orbit, for example SOS Genocide, Mouvement pour une Immigration restreinte et francophone (MIREF) (Movement for a Restricted and Francophone Immigration), and similar groups which basically represent the extreme right of the Quebec nationalist movement. Once word got out in late July that the NF were coming, people started organizing around that. At about the same time people found out through the media that the Heritage Front (HF) was organizing a recruitment concert at which RAHOWA (note: Racial HOLY WAR, a band made up of members of the Toronto-based Church of the Creator) and other groups were playing in Montreal on August 14. So a coalition came together very quickly- it organized a demo. on August 14 which had 800 people, though coalition organizers only expected about 100 people. The organizers were caught completely off guard, and although at first they said they'd let people know where the HF was meeting so that people could go there and confront them, they refused to do so. So it turned into an ineffectual downtown demo. miles away from where the HF was meeting. Subsequently there were much larger meetings of the coalition. Many community groups got involved, and certain factions solidified within the coalition and everyone started organizing for the week when the NF was coming. There were actions on Sunday (Sept. 19/93) when the NF delegates arrived. There was a small airport action at which 15 people got right up close to Le Gallou and basically shouted at him and that's as far as it went. People then followed him from the airport and found out where he was staying in Montreal.

On Tuesday (Sept. 21/93) there was basically a symbolic demo. in front of the Palais des Congres (note: site of the Metropolis '93 congress). At first it was supposed to be a picket line to keep the NF delegates out but it didn't work. There's a possibility that the NF delegates didn't even have to go outside of their hotel as there may be a tunnel that connects the hotel they were in to the Palais des Congres. And on

Wednesday (Sept. 22/93) there was a small demo. outside of an afternoon NF press conference, at which the split between the NF delegates and the local Klan occurred.

(3)

Maybe you could talk more of the split that did occur?

Basically, the local NF support group here, headed by Alacoque, has a close relationship with a Ku Klux Klan chapter headed by Michel Larocque, which is a very small Klan cell active mainly in the East End. There's at least one man who's a member of both the NF and the Klan. Several skinheads are Front supporters, sympathizers. And Alacoque has been quoted in the media saying Larocque is a "good guy". In my opinion Alacoque's more important ties are with Jeunes Nation. None of them are skinheads, they all go to university, they all look very clean and none of them probably know anything about skinhead culture, which is what the media likes talking about. The NF has for the past eight years tried to avoid any links with skinheads despite the fact that the NF has a strong Nazi faction. It has many other factions and does anything it can to hide the existence of a Nazi faction or ex-Nazi terrorists in the group. So basically what Alacoque was doing here in Montreal- having links with Larocque and skinheads- was not what the NF does in France. Once Le Gallou found out Alacoque had basically arranged for his security service to be made up of skinheads and Klansmen, he probably freaked out. That's what happened at the press conference, where Michel Larocque was. He said, probably quite sincerely, that he had been invited to do security by Alacoque and Le Gallou basically said he disassociates himself completely from skinheads and the Klan. Larocque was apparently very angry. It's unsure what's going to happen to Alacoque in all of this; if he's now going to be the major enemy of the Klan, or if he'll now leave the NF support group, if he'll be replaced by someone else. It's unsure. Alacoque's definitely having some degree of crisis at the moment.

(4)

Describe some of the major extreme right organizations in Quebec and some of their recent actions, for example there was the killing of a gay man last fall?

The groups in Montreal at the moment are Larocque's Klan, another rumoured West Island Klan- which no one is sure if it exists or not, it has no public profile- and a Laval Klan. Apart from that there are skinheads who are centred around a band called INVOLVED PATRIOTS, which is a band made up of ex-members of White Power Canada, which is a skinhead group that allegedly disbanded in January but which was linked a month earlier to the murder of Yves Lalonde at Agrignon Park. Maybe I'll talk a little about that: basically it was a group of skinheads from Lasalle who were trying to set up their own local chapter affiliated with the NSDAP/AO (Nationale-sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter-parte Auslands und Aufbauorganisation, a National Socialist (ie. Nazi) organization that claims to be the legitimate heir to Hitler's NSDAP. The AO refers to overseas organization), which is based in Nebraska. They had attended a White Power Canada meeting a few days before the murder took place. Late in November (note: Nov. 29/92) they went to Agrignon Park with the goal of "cleaning it up" and "making it safe for

children", in their words. One of their members would go up to men and offer sex. At last Yves Lalonde was alledgedly a man who said he was interested, at which point the skinhead said "ok, follow me". They were walking and he said "ok, get him guys" and a whole bunch of his friends jumped out with baseball bats and cracked Lalonde's skull open and killed him. They were arrested within a week due to informers and the police bugging their houses (Note: see documentation). They were taped as saying "they had done it for their race", and it was quite obvious they were trying to set up their own organization. It's unsure if it would've been a replacement for, a rival to, or a friend of White Power Canada(WPC)- but a month later WPC disbanded, though that scene from which they came from, and the WPC scene- which was the recruitment area for some of the most violent skins involved in Larocque's scene, still exists. It's now centered around the band Involved Patriots, which played with RAcial HOLy WAR on August 14. One ex-member of WPC is Brent Knox. He lives in Laval, and the phone number and address of a Brent Knox- possibly the same one- is in the white pages in Montreal. He's the local above-ground Heritage Front organizer. He's good friends with Jean-Sebastien Lapierre, who's head of the KKK chapter in Laval. The HF in Montreal is probably going to try and base itself around that scene while establishing links with groups like Jeune Nation, which sociologically are made up of a completely different kind of person. A lot older, better educated. They like to see themselves and present themselves as the cultural elite of Quebec. They have links with various extreme right groups in France. Also with certain groups in Ontario, for example Paul Fromm's Citizen's for Foreign Aid Review, which likes to pass itself off as a very respectable group. Jeune Nation basically sees itself as defending French Canadian nationalism as opposed to Quebecois nationalism. It defines the French Canadian nation as a Catholic nation which exists throughout North America and basically they call for going back to the pre- days. They emulate a kind of Action Francaise fascism, which would be a cultural as well as genetic fascism, closer to what you saw in France during the Second World War and in Germany. They have links with Catholic extremists in the countryside, and they also have links with local nationalist racist groups. For instance, SOS-Genocide, which counter-demonstrated against pro-Mohawk demonstrations throughout the Oka Crisis.

Apart from that you have the Klan group led by Michel Larocque who's past includes being an agent of the security service, running for the provincial legislature under the Parti Independantiste in the mid-80s, and alledgedly being involved at the moment in collecting files and doing surveillance of leftists. When Larocque's group started it was affiliated with the Invisible Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (IEKKK), which was JW Farrand's group based in the US. But JW Farrand viewed Quebec nationalism as a Jewish ploy to divide Canada, so Larocque split from that group and is now part of a rival Invisible Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., which is based in N. Carolina. This group sees federalism as a Jewish ploy to keep Canada

together and to suffocate the Quebecois. There's another group that stayed with Farrand's group- that's a Klan chapter led by Eric Vachon based in Sherbrooke, so it really has a minimal, if any, impact in Montreal. Larocque's group hasn't been doing much lately, other than this National Front stuff and of course being active in spreading the word about the HF. They also came in at the tail end of three days of very nasty anti-prostitute rioting which happened in the East End. It was basically three days of rioting in which any single woman walking down the streets would be beaten up and women living alone would have their places torched. One crack house was burned down. The police refused to make any arrests. During the last day of rioting the Klan held a little rally calling for all the prostitutes to be kicked out. Prior to that it had been active in doing little support demo.s for Martin Belhumeur, who was a neighbor of Larocque's and who was arrested along with Larocque and several WPC skinheads a year earlier. They had several Molotov cocktails with them and they were going to a house which was inhabited by an immigrant family. Word has it they were going to firebomb it. At the moment, Larocque is still around- he's still an important character on the extreme right, but his Klan group isn't particularly important at the moment, though that could easily change in time.

(5) How organized do you see the extreme right in Montreal, and in Quebec overall, as being? What are some of the main extreme right organizations?

At one point Larocque's Klan might have aspired to the position that the HF has in Toronto but never got there... There's really no group in Montreal that plays the same role as the HF does in Toronto and it's not for lack of trying. Some extreme right groups wouldn't be interested in that role, for instance Jeune Nation. They have a journal, which is very hard to get a hold of: you have to write and send them personal information before they'll send you a copy. They have contacts in universities, and probably elsewhere. They're a crossover between old-guard nazis of the 30s and Catholic fundamentalists in the countryside, as well as local extreme right-wing nationalists. The extreme right-wing nationalist scene can mobilize small amounts of people and their message always risks catching a much wider appeal. For instance, during the Oka Crisis, they received a much wider base of support than they have since or before. Also during the Meech Lake Accord (note: a constitutional amendment proposal by the federal government which would grant Quebec the status of a "distinct society" within Canada, opposed by both progressive and reactionary forces in English Canada, including First Nations and women's groups). Though in general they're fairly negligible. They have their own small groups. The only risk is that they do have a certain effect on the political discourse, in the mainstream political culture, because they're not nazis and they're not fascists, they're just a part of the time honoured tradition of white people living in North America, which is that they're racists and they want to protect their ethnic groups position and strengthen it.

There's really no one that can mobilize a lot of people

though they'd like to. The Klan would like to. White Power Canada was quite organized and it was carrying out quite nasty actions. What's troubling is that the NSDAP/AO clearly had some links with people in that scene, specifically the skinheads who killed Yves Lalonde. Recently, NSDAP/AO literature has been found in Montreal, so it's unsure to what degree they're trying to come in and fill the vacuum. It's possible we'll see an HF group take off in Montreal, though it's unlikely simply because of the fact that it's coming from English Canada, and groups from English Canada have historically not been very successful in getting large followings from Quebec. Quebec groups have much better chances at getting large followings. There's also groups like the Larouchites; no one's quite sure what they're up to. They try and operate as a spy network these days. They're certainly very organized but it's unsure what they're doing with that organization.

⑥ What kind of links do you see between the extreme right in Quebec and the rest of Canada?

Well, it's on two levels. On one level you have basically a street-based extreme right which isn't very intellectual, will read the zines but won't read the theoretical journals. It doesn't really have many links outside Quebec, although there's a lot of friendship links. For a long time there were skins who'd bop between Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto. Then you have the slightly more- not mainstream- but low-key groups who have links to the Citizen's for Foreign Aid Review, which is Paul Fromm's group. But they would tend to have more links with the extreme right in France, and Switzerland. My guess would be you'd find more links between Quebec and France than you'd find between certain activists in Montreal and Toronto.

The Klan chapters, the Klan being an American organization, tend to be more linked to various American groups, and they try to get their newspapers through the US and all that, and maybe that's a part of why they don't really take off in Quebec.

There's also groups like the Larouchites who are a part of their own international network and noone's really sure where that's at.

There are also groups like the anti-abortion groups, various law-and-order type groups, which would have links with the Northern Foundation- which is a Canadian umbrella group. In fact, it was at a Northern Foundation meeting that the HF announced itself. And that's about it. The language barrier is one major obstacle- though it's not as big a problem as you might imagine. For instance, the Canadians for Foreign Aid Review distributes propaganda that immigrants are part of an anti-Quebecois plot, while at the same time distributing propaganda saying official bi-lingualism is part of an anti-English plot on the part of the French. So there's room for a lot of organizations who realize it doesn't matter if you're a racist because you're a Quebecois nationalist, an anti-Quebecois nationalist or because you're a Canadian nationalist. So they're willing to basically make non-sectarian links. There are other organizations that are less willing to, and that's probably why you have less cooperation.

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What are some of the main anti-fascist organizations in Montreal?

The Ligue Anti-Fasciste Mondiale (LAM- World Anti-Fascist League, based only in Montreal) was the first of these groups to see the light of day and they basically started out as an Anti-Racist Action-type group. They really took off when they successfully repelled an attack by nazi skinheads several years ago at a Berurier Noir hardcore music concert in downtown Montreal. There were various power struggles within the group. The group never really had any pretensions of being a democratic street gang. It was basically a street gang without any democracy involved. It had quite macho factions in all of this. One member of the group, Alain Dufour, became very central, and basically led the group from being a street gang to what some have called a government watch-dog, and what others have described as simply a mainstream anti-racist group that gets a lot of government funding, although their government funding has been cut completely destroying their operations in many ways. They've been critiscized quite severely by the CCRP and other groups for passing info onto the police and the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service, and alledgedly collecting info on "radical racist" groups within non-white communities, for example the Nation of Islam, Jewish Defense League-type groups, etc. As well, they supposedly collected info on authoritarian left groups, and left groups they believe are prone to violence. They deny doing it (note: see documentation), and there's no proof. There's never been a court case in which LAM info has been cited. So there's no proof that they do this. All it shows is that it's not a political priority for them to prove that they don't do this. But this doesn't necessarily make them guilty.

The Canadian Centre on Racism and Prejudice is a group made up largely of the '70s left in Quebec, who survived, remained on the left, stuck around groups like Group Action Socialiste which is a Moaist organization, or remained independent activists occasionally doing good work. They set up this group shortly after the LAM existed. They had a tense relationship with the LAM at first, which quickly degraded into an all-out war.

Martin Therriault (note: director of CCRP), is on the record in the media having said that LAM is worse than nazis. For its part the LAM has implied it views members of the CCRP as being as being as bad as the fascists by going public and saying to support Sendero Luminoso is to support a fascist group, while it's well known that Group Action Socialiste, which is very close to the CCRP, supports Sendero openly. The CCRP hasn't ~~hasn't~~ had much impact in Montreal, though I've heard it has accomplished more outside the city. However, it was behind the founding of this coalition and as such I must admit it's done more ~~to~~ ^{for} Montreal as of Sept¹⁴ '93 than any other group has done for quite some time.

Un Quebec Pour Tout Le Monde started about a year ago in response to the "Aryan Fest" which was being held in Sorrel. They're basically a libertarian Francophone group based in the universities. They do a lot of cultural intervention: putting up

posters, holding concerts. They try to keep channels open both with the CCRP and LAM, and try and avoid sectarianism as such.

Politically they're probably the group most encouraging to see on the political landscape as far as I'm concerned...

Unfortunately they are a small group, and perhaps because of their politics they don't want to form into a big citywide coalition.

The only other group I should maybe mention is SHARP which does a lot of good work, but low-key work, so I can't get into the details.

Those are basically the groups doing ~~anti-extra right-wing~~ work. As for anti-racist work in general, there is AKAX, which is a Black youth group, based around Concordia. They're a part of the coalition, or sympathetic to it.

What do you see for the future of anti-fascist resistance?

What do you see the work that you need to do?

Well, thankfully the Coalition's brought together a lot of people who have good politics, who have their hearts in the right place, and even though many of us feel that the people making the decisions, perhaps we have serious political disagreements with them, nevertheless it's brought us all out and, specifically in the last demo., it's made us see what our weaknesses are. We have to start working on those weaknesses. It's also let us know who each other are, so we'll be able to start working together. Hopefully that can happen. Maybe then you'll see something separate from the LAM-CCRP in-fighting that's been going on. Hopefully Un Quebec Pour Tout le Monde will remain active, because they're doing very important work that the left in Quebec tends to neglect completely (ie. ~~criticizing~~ day-to-day racism). As for the CCRP I'm sure it will continue to exist. as will the LAM. One can only hope they'll start spending less of their time fighting each other, or that they'll prove some of their allegations.

Okay, thanks a lot!